



COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

Federal Communications Commission

June 23, 2021

Purpose

This plan updates and memorializes the FCC's framework for safe workplace operations as the Nation continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, the FCC's priority has always been the health and safety of its staff (employees and contractors) while continuing to move forward strategic initiatives and sustain operations. On January 20, 2021, the White House issued an Executive Order entitled "Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing" (Executive Order 13991) and on January 24, 2021, the Office of Management and Budget issued Memorandum 21-15 providing further guidance to agencies on the Executive Order and model safety principles for agencies to follow as they build tailored COVID-19 workplace safety plans. This FCC Workplace Safety Plan is intended to be fully compliant with Executive Order 13991 and Memorandum 21-15 and will be updated periodically to reflect any additional federal government guidance directed to federal agencies.

COVID-19 Coordination Team

As COVID-19 began to emerge as a possible pandemic-causing disease, the FCC assembled a management team to lead planning and response efforts to COVID-19. The team meets regularly and is led by the Managing Director and is comprised of staff from the Office of General Counsel, Human Resources, and Administrative Operations (which encompasses occupational health and safety), as well as the Chief Information Officer and the Continuity Coordinator. The Managing Director coordinates recommended actions and decisions with the Office of the Chairwoman through the FCC's Chief of Staff. This team will also serve as the COVID-19 Coordination Team each agency is to establish pursuant to OMB Memorandum 21-15, which is responsible for conducting assessments in order to establish, implement and monitor compliance with (a) safety protocols for physical space and masking, and (b) determinations of on-site and telework/remote working, as well as consider potential revision to agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans and protocols and any other operational needs. Consistent with guidance from OMB, the FCC will also coordinate, as appropriate, with GSA and building security and safety committees regarding the FCC's Federally leased space, as well as a public health expert designated by the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force. Any FCC staff who observes a violation of the policies and practices set forth herein should promptly report it to MaryKay Mitchell at MaryKay.Mitchell@FCC.gov.

Communication

FCC staff will continue to regularly receive communications on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on FCC operations. Communications will be made primarily using the FCC email system and may include messages from the FCC Chairwoman, the FCC Chief of Staff, Human Resources, or other senior agency executives. Some information may also be communicated to staff using the FCC Emergency Notification System when necessary. In addition, the agency has established a COVID-19 information page with pertinent updates about the pandemic and useful information for staff on the FCC Employee Portal.

Health and Safety

Telework and Remote Work

As a general principle, (1) every effort will be made to maximize the use of remote work during widespread community transmission, and (2) occupancy in FCC workplaces will be limited to 25% of normal capacity during periods of significant or high community transmission. Levels of community transmission will be established by consulting CDC's COVID Data Tracker County View.

Consistent with these principles, the FCC's initial response in February 2020 to the emerging pandemic was to allow maximum telework flexibility for staff, and then it moved to a mandatory telework posture in March 2020 for all but a small number of staff whom the FCC determined could not perform mission-critical duties remotely and such activities could not be delayed. FCC staff and contractors performing mission critical on-site activities are approved for entrance to FCC facilities on a case-by-case basis by the relevant Bureau/Office Chief and the FCC's Office of Managing Director.

In addition, on January 28, 2021, the FCC announced that regardless of when mandatory telework ends, employees currently teleworking would have the option to continue to do so through at least August 2021. The FCC will provide advance notice and guidance to employees currently working remotely on a frequent or regular basis because of the pandemic before returning them to the physical workplace.

Face Masks

Except for fully vaccinated employees, contractors and visitors, everyone in an FCC facility is required to wear a face mask over their nose and mouth at all times. "Fully vaccinated" means an individual has received both doses of a two- dose COVID-19 vaccine or one dose of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine and at least 14 days have passed since the individual's final dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

The face mask must be in accordance with any current CDC and OSHA guidance, both of which may change from time to time. CDC recommends the following: non-medical disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e. fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets. Novelty/non-protective masks, masks with ventilation valves, and face shields as a substitute for masks are NOT permitted.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the FCC purchased triple-ply cloth face coverings for all staff. FCC staff may use one of those face coverings or may use their own compliant face covering (the same they might use when out in public). A person should handle a face mask only by the ear loops or ties and should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on a face covering, as well as after removing. Cloth face coverings should be laundered regularly to keep them clean. The washed face covering should be completely dry before using.

Individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with safety and security requirements. Provided social distance in accordance with CDC guidelines is maintained, individuals wearing a face mask may also briefly lower it while actively eating or drinking. Employees who are unable to wear a face mask due to physical or medical conditions, should contact the FCC Office of Workplace Diversity to discuss alternate accommodations. Similarly, alternate arrangements may be made for persons communicating with the hearing impaired when the mouth needs to be visible.

Testing

As required in Executive Order 13991, the FCC understands that the CDC is developing a testing plan for the Federal workforce and that the CDC will submit that plan to the COVID-19 Response Coordinator. When the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force notifies agencies of the CDC's testing plan, this Plan will be updated to reflect the new guidance.

Currently, staff are encouraged to follow CDC guidance and get tested if they have symptoms of COVID-19; there is a risk that they have been exposed to COVID-19 (e.g. have had close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19; have taken part in activities that put them at a higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot socially distance as needed); or have been asked or referred to get testing by their healthcare provider, local, or state health department. As a reminder, staff who have been or are scheduled to be on-site at an FCC facility should contact their supervisor, OMD, or their COR (for contractors) for guidance if they believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 within the time frame designated by the CDC (currently, 14 days with possibility of reduced quarantine periods of 7 or 10 days).

Contact Tracing

If a supervisor or COR receives notification from FCC staff that he or she has been in an FCC facility within the past 14 days and has become symptomatic, has been diagnosed with, or has been exposed to COVID-19, the supervisor or COR will immediately notify the Managing Director. The FCC's COVID-19 Coordination Team will conduct a contact evaluation to determine:

- Areas within the facility where the individual may have been
- Other FCC staff or visitors who may have had contact with the individual or been in similar areas within the facility

FCC staff or visitors who are determined to be at risk of COVID-19 from possible contact within the FCC facility will be notified to the extent possible and will quarantine away from the FCC facility for a quarantine period consistent with CDC guidance. The COVID-19 Coordination Team will also ensure that appropriate infection controls, cleaning and disinfection, and/or other workplace safety efforts are conducted once informed of a case of COVID-19 within an FCC facility, and will communicate related information to staff, as relevant and appropriate, consistent with local and Federal privacy and confidentiality regulations and laws.

The Office of Managing Director shall have the responsibility to make disclosures to local public health officials as required or necessary to provide for the public health and safety of Federal employees and contractors, in accordance with local public health mandates. If COVID-19 cases occur within a specific building or work setting, it will be the responsibility of the COVID-19 Coordination Team to determine—in consultation with local public health officials—appropriate next steps.

Travel

FCC staff should adhere strictly to [CDC guidelines](#) before, during, and after travel, regardless of whether the travel is personal or for official business. At this time, these include the following precautions: carefully assessing travel risk prior to travel, wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance from non-household members, maintaining good hand hygiene by regularly washing hands with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, and getting tested and staying home after higher-

risk travel before returning to the workplace. The CDC has extensive guidelines for both domestic and international travel, and federal workers should consult these resources carefully before deciding to travel. Official travel during the pandemic should also follow applicable guidance from OMB and GSA.

FCC staff should be aware that they may be required to stay at home for a period of time after official or personal travel (typically allowing the employee to request personal leave when it results from personal travel, if an employee is otherwise expected to be present onsite) before they are allowed to return to the workplace, as well as following any testing guidance once issued. Private transportation for official travel is preferred to use of public or other communal transportation, in combination with other safety/security guidance. Before traveling, FCC staff should check [saferfederalworkforce.gov](https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov) and [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for additional guidance and advice.

Any FCC staff **working in an FCC facility** should notify his/her supervisor before any travel (personal or official commences. This requirement does not apply to any FCC staff that is teleworking full-time at the time travel commences, provided that the traveler intends to continue teleworking full-time for at least two weeks following the conclusion of such travel.

Given currently high levels of transmission in the United States, official domestic travel should be limited to only mission critical trips. International travel should also be avoided if at all possible, unless it is mission critical (e.g., high-level international negotiations that cannot occur remotely). Approval of official travel for FCC employees will be made on a case-by-case basis by Bureau/Office leadership, in conjunction with the Office of the Chairwoman and COVID-19 Coordination Team as necessary, including consideration of the purpose of the travel, its mission-criticality and/or time-sensitivity, alternatives to official travel, and potential risks and mitigation efforts to the health and safety of agency employees.

Symptom Monitoring

If FCC employees, on-site contractors, or visitors are not feeling well, they should not enter an FCC facility, even where they have prior approval to do so.

Prior to coming to an FCC facility, all FCC staff members will be asked to perform a COVID-19 symptom screening based on [CDC guidance](https://www.cdc.gov). During this self-screening, staff will be expected to take their own temperature before reporting to work and check for other COVID-19 symptoms.

FCC staff who have any of these symptoms must not to come to an FCC facility:

- Fever (100.4 F or higher)
- Feeling feverish (chills, sweating)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body ache
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Similar symptoms from ongoing health issues that are not related to COVID-19 should not be included as part of staff screening. FCC staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 will notify their supervisor or COR (for contractors) immediately and determine if they are able to telework or need to take leave.

FCC staff must continue to self-monitor for symptoms while on-site. Anyone who begins to experience a fever or other symptoms while on-site must immediately isolate, notify their supervisor or COR (for contractors) and promptly leave the FCC facility.

FCC staff who believe that they have COVID-19 symptoms should contact their health provider immediately for medical advice or testing.

Quarantine and Isolation

Any individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 will be advised to isolate, pursuant to [CDC guidelines](#), and in compliance with local laws/regulations. FCC staff who have had close contact in the past 7 days with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should follow CDC and local guidance for [quarantine](#).

Any FCC staff members who have accessed an FCC facility within 14 days and become symptomatic, are diagnosed with, or are exposed to COVID-19, will notify their supervisor or COR immediately, who will then notify the Managing Director.

No person (staff or visitor) who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 will be allowed to enter an FCC facility until they meet the associated [CDC isolation guidance](#). As of this date, such persons who have had COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed cases of COVID-19 can return after:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation

Consistent with [CDC quarantine guidance](#), FCC staff who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months or who are fully vaccinated, will be prohibited from coming to an FCC facility for 14 days after their last contact with a person who has COVID-19. The 14-day quarantine period may be reduced if consistent with applicable CDC and local guidance. For quarantine purposes, a close contact encompasses:

- Being within 6 feet of someone how has COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period;
- Providing care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19;
- Having direct physical contact with a person who has COVID-19 (e.g. hugged or kissed them);
- Sharing eating or drinking utensils with someone who has COVID-19; or
- Having a person with COVID-19 sneeze, cough, or otherwise get respiratory droplets on you.

FCC staff who would otherwise be required to work from an FCC facility should notify their supervisor or COR (for contractors) of a need to isolate or quarantine to determine if they are able to telework or need to take leave.

Confidentiality

All medical information collected from FCC staff, including test results and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated confidentially in accordance with applicable law, and accessible only by those with a need to know in order to protect the health and safety of FCC staff. All questions relating to personal medical data related to COVID-19 should be referred to the Managing Director.

Workplace Operations

Occupancy

No FCC facility will operate above 25% of normal occupancy standards at any given time during periods of high community prevalence or transmission. Exceptions to this policy must be cleared by the FCC Chairwoman as advised by the FCC COVID-19 Coordination Team and in consultation with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force.

Access to FCC facilities will be tightly controlled, including requiring prior approval by the applicable B/O Chief and Managing Director (or their designees), to minimize the risk of COVID-19 to FCC staff and ensure compliance with occupancy limits. Unless access to an FCC facility is approved, remaining staff are required to telework or be in a leave status.

Physical Distancing

To the maximum extent practicable, individuals authorized to access an FCC facility must maintain distance of at least 6 feet from others at all time within the facility. **The requirement for social distancing does not apply to fully vaccinated FCC employees, contractors, or visitors. However, anyone that has not been fully vaccinated must continue to wear a mask and practice social distancing.** Meetings, events, training classes, and other on-site activities that congregate people together will be limited to the maximum extent possible. The FCC will take other actions to further minimize interactions, such as closing meeting, conference, or other communal spaces; posting signs notifying staff of applicable reduced occupancy limits (particularly in communal spaces); establishing one-way walkways; and limiting overall access to FCC facilities.

Physical distancing and testing are not substitutes for wearing masks. All visitors, as well as FCC employees and contractors who have not been fully vaccinated, must still wear masks when following physical distancing guidelines. Individuals required to wear mask must do so at all times in the building except where an individual is actively eating or drinking while maintaining physical distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines. Additional guidance is provided in the Face Masks section above.

Environmental Cleaning

Cleanliness of FCC facilities will be maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For GSA-leased spaces, including field offices, OMD will also work with GSA and Building Management to ensure proper cleanliness is maintained in FCC spaces. Hard surfaces in common areas will be cleaned and disinfected routinely as part of the regular custodial services for the facility. Enhanced cleaning in common use/high touch/high density spaces, such as lobbies, restrooms, elevators, and stairwells will be provided. Where necessary, EPA-approved disinfectants will be made available for individuals to wipe down their workstation and related personal property, generally in the form of disinfecting wipes.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace (if the individual had been in the building up to seven days prior), enhanced environmental cleaning will be performed in accordance with CDC and GSA guidance. If such enhanced cleaning is required, the agency will endeavor to wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting. FCC staff and visitors may be asked to vacate the affected space until cleaning or disinfection is completed. The agency's COVID-19 Coordination Team will determine the appropriate scope of workplace closures—in some cases, it may be a suite or offices or part of a floor, in other cases, it may include an entire building.

Hygiene

While in FCC facilities, staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer or alcohol-based hand rubs frequently. Hand sanitizer stations are available at facility entrances and throughout workspaces and contain FDA-approved hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol. Hand soap, water, and paper towels are also readily available within each facility, such as in pantries and restrooms.

Ventilation and Air Filtration

The FCC will work with GSA and Building Management for FCC facilities in GSA-leased properties to optimize indoor ventilation to the maximum extent feasible, such as increasing the proportion of outdoor ventilation, improving filtration, and/or reducing or eliminating recirculation. The FCC will undertake the same considerations for FCC-owned facilities.

Visitors

Except for emergency or exceptional circumstances (e.g. emergency facility repairs; classified briefings), no visitors will be allowed access to FCC facilities during the pandemic. The Managing Director will manage the approval of access to FCC facilities to ensure access is granted consistent with the FCC's Workplace Safety Plan and that all visitors authorized to access a facility are aware of applicable protection protocols. In addition, the approval process allows the FCC to help ensure adequate cleaning of occupied spaces and safe social distancing can be achieved.

Before being allowed to enter an FCC facility, approved visitors will be required to confirm to their escort, at a minimum, that they have no COVID-19 symptoms and passed the FCC Health Self-Screening checklist. Visitor escorts are responsible for ensuring that the visitor wears an appropriate mask and follows physical distancing guidelines, if the visitor has not been fully vaccinated.

Elevators

The FCC will work with GSA and Building Management for FCC facilities in GSA-leased properties to limit elevator rides to two passengers per car to allow distancing at opposite corners of elevator cars. Individuals must wear masks in elevators and in elevator lobbies. Staff should use the physical markings on the floor in elevator lobbies to maintain a distance of six feet. The use of stairs by those who are physically able is strongly encouraged. Posted signage explains current procedures.

Shared Spaces

The majority of FCC staff utilize sole-occupancy workspaces with dedicated equipment. Accordingly, limited shared spaces and equipment, as well as limited overall access to FCC facilities, physical distancing, measures to limit interactions, and the use of face masks at all times, should largely mitigate the risk that COVID-19 will be contracted through contaminated surfaces, particularly from personal property and/or in personal workspaces. The FCC has also provided styluses to staff for use on high-touch surfaces. Hand sanitizer and/or soap and water are also readily available in common spaces, such as pantries. To the extent equipment must be shared or transferred between users without sufficient time for potential virus to naturally die, or in other appropriate circumstances, the FCC will provide appropriate disinfecting supplies for the equipment.